



# REVIEWS

## BOOKS

Reviewed by Ruth Parnell

### THE TEMPLAR PIRATES: The Secret Alliance to Build the New Jerusalem by Ernesto Frers

Destiny Books, Rochester, VT, USA, 2007 (pub. in Spanish as *Piratas y Templarios*, Ediciones Robinbook, Barcelona, 2005) ISBN 1-59477-146-4 (183pp tpb) Available: <http://www.DestinyBooks.com>

Piracy has been around for as long as seafaring and has played its part in the unfolding of history since four millennia ago when Egyptian and Phoenician cargo ships were first targeted. In the sixth century BC, it became an organised method of plundering and subjugating coastal and island peoples in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas.

This is the launching point for mediaeval historian Ernesto Frers, but his prime interest here is in the role of the Knights Templar. The Norman Templar king Roger II of Sicily was the first to fly the so-called Jolly Roger flag (the skull and crossbones) in defiance of the pope in 1127, but it was not until their excommunication by Pope Clement V in 1307 that the Templars turned to maritime piracy in a big way. This was after they received a tip-off ahead of a raid by French king Philip IV's troops and decided to flee their port of La Rochelle. Their divided fleet headed for disparate destinations: Portugal, Scotland and the New World, where, later, with Henry Sinclair's backing, they established colonies in a bid to build a New Jerusalem, free of papist control. Indeed, the Templars' piracy for hundreds of years was part of their secret war against the Holy See, and their efforts were

bolstered by opportunistic buccaneers from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean.

Frers traces the influence of the remnant Templars in the expeditions of Christopher Columbus, Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh as well as French Huguenot buccaneers who started their own libertarian brotherhood. The pirate knights and their brothers also influenced the rise of the revolutionary movements in France and America along with the growth of Freemasonry, four of whose members—Franklin, Jefferson, Adams and Paine—helped to write the US Declaration of Independence. These are fascinating undercurrents with occult offshoots which Frers brings to light, and they present a different picture from "official" history.

### THE LORDS OF AVARIS: Uncovering the Legendary Origins of Western Civilisation

by David Rohl

Century, London, UK, 2007 ISBN 1-7126-7762-3 (524pp hc)

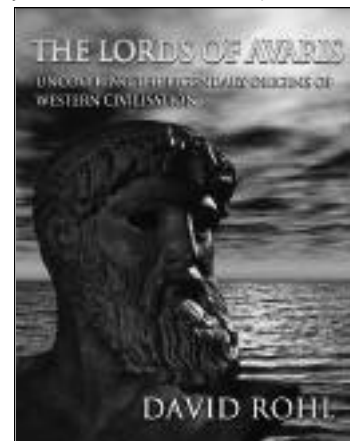
Available: see [www.randomhouse.co.uk](http://www.randomhouse.co.uk)

The origins of Western civilisation are traditionally sourced in Classical Greece and Rome, cultures that are traceable to the Heroic Age of ancient Minoan Crete, Mycenaean Greece and Trojan Anatolia (Turkey). But what if the myths of minotaurs and labyrinths, Trojan warriors and Cyclopean citadels were not just the stuff of Homeric legend but historical narratives?

Archaeologist David Rohl (*The Lost Testament*, NEXUS 10/02) has managed to bring these myths to life by applying the same New Chronology (NC) he proposed in his 1995 book *A Test of Time*, which gives a radical down-dating of Egyptian history by deleting three centuries of "artificial time"

from the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period. But not only does his NC offer an historical timeline for the Old Testament narratives, it places the Heroic legends in their proper context.

The scene begins in the second millennium BC, following a catastrophe and subsequent famine that destroyed many Middle Eastern cities and ended the Early Bronze Age. It's the time when Indo-European-speaking tribes from the north, who became the Hittites and the later founders of the Greek, Persian and Roman empires, began their invasions of Mesopotamia and Egypt, thus creating a three-way struggle. Starting with the Hyksos who ruled in Avaris in the Nile Delta, Rohl takes the reader on an epic journey through 2,000 years of history, ending with the foundation of Rome by the Trojan hero Aeneas. On the way, among other events he explains the sudden appearance of the Etruscans in Hesperia (Italy). Rohl's superbly illustrated book complements his richly detailed text. *A tour de force.*



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## PARALLEL UNIVERSES OF SELF

by Frederick E. Dodson

Llumina Press, USA, 2006

ISBN 978-1-59526-654-5 (323pp tpb)

Available: <http://www.llumina.com>

Life is too short to waste time in the headspace of an insignificant, needy person when you can revel in the real you as a multidimensional, eternal being, says "reality-creation coach" Fred Dodson. Based in Germany, he has been teaching creative learning for the last 10 years, and in this, his 16th book, he provides well-honed mental and emotional techniques for exploring reality and consciousness. His first bit of advice is to "go for the real thing"—for experience, not just knowledge for its own sake—and with joy in the process.

Dodson's take on reality creation (RC) is inspired by the latest ways of thinking in frontier science; it's a theory of "parallel universe reality emulation" (PURE), and is more expansive than some "new age" versions of RC that he regards as hindered by egocentric focus and based on a sense of lack and wishful thinking. Surely influenced by ancient Hermetic philosophy with its laws of correspondence and attraction, Dodson says that if like attracts like then lack attracts lack. The shortcut to your heart's desire is being "the version of yourself that is already experiencing that reality", but attachment to that desire isn't the way.

By tapping into the infinite self, however, we don't actually create reality because within infinity everything already exists; thus it doesn't need creating. But that doesn't mean that we can avoid personal responsibility or shirk common sense and intuition, our own "inner authority": we'll never feel fulfilled if we do. He recommends taking time to

become silent and relaxed, and to connect with happiness in the here and now. His own stories about the path of enlightenment are instructive, and much of what he says will give a sense of *déjà vu* to fellow seekers. If I had to sum this up, I'd say you'll never get from A to B as long as you maintain the distance. Just *be* there!

## COURAGEOUS SOULS: Do We Plan Our Life Challenges Before Birth?

by Robert Schwartz

Whispering Winds Press, USA, 2007

ISBN 0-9776794-5-4 (319pp tpb)

Available: [www.CourageousSouls.com](http://www.CourageousSouls.com)

It's one thing to countenance reincarnation but it's another to think that maybe we plan our major challenges in life before we are born, and in agreement with other souls. Four years ago, marketing consultant Robert Schwartz set out to explore the meaning of life and decided to visit a medium. She explained that we all have spirit guides—noncorporeal and nonjudgemental beings whom we consult when we plan our lives in between incarnations—but we also have free will. Schwartz went through a reawakening process and soon afterwards had an enhanced communication with his soul in an experience where he felt unconditional love for everyone. This set him on a path to ascertain *why* he'd pre-planned certain learning experiences in his life. The result of his questing is this book.

Schwartz recruited the assistance of four mediums and channels and posted messages on Internet bulletin boards, seeking feedback from individuals keen to explore any underlying difficulties they've faced in life. Dozens of people were involved in this pre-birth-planning study, and the stories of 10

"courageous souls" were chosen for inclusion. With the help of the psychics, they delved into issues to do with physical illness and disability, handicapped children, drug and alcohol addiction, accidents and deaths. Each case is presented with notes from the psychic readings where the spirit guides were contacted. Despite their difficulties, each person came to understand that their "life script" was agreed upon and motivated by love and the opportunity for soul growth fostered by learning through hard knocks.

Their stories and their resolutions are deeply moving and make us wonder whether we have indeed set ourselves up for tragedy and triumph in order to progress our own evolution and that of others. We are left feeling heartened by the prospect that we can tap into our soul space and transform anger, guilt and blame into love, forgiveness and acceptance. Schwartz's research is a life-affirming exercise that shows we direct our soul learning and aren't hapless victims of the vagaries of fate.



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## HOW TO SWAP ASTHMA FOR LIFE by Michael Clark, NMQAA

The Well Naturally Pub. House, UK, 2007  
ISBN 978-0-9555839-0-2 (261pp tpb)

Available: <http://www.wellnaturally.co.uk>

That the UK alone has five million diagnosed cases of asthma and 18,000 new cases each week is cause for great concern, and UK Buteyko practitioner Michael Clark is determined to do something about it. In fact, he met Prof. Buteyko, developer of the scientifically based breathing technique that overcomes "overbreathing", just months before he died in 2003 and promised to spread the word about the technique.

In his book, Clark gives a brief history of asthma before describing the different types of asthma and their triggers, which can include allergens such as animal dander, pollen and dust mite dirt, airborne pollutants, perfumes, bacteria, poor diet (e.g., too much acidifying rather than alkalising food), stress and even fear. He then discusses the conventional asthma medications and their side effects, and follows up with information about Buteyko's treatment and the science of respiration and breathing.

In the following sections, Clark explains some essential breathing and posture techniques that have been used successfully in teaching asthmatics how to breathe properly without hyperventilating. This condition causes a depletion of carbon dioxide in the lungs, which causes the blood vessels to spasm and tissues to be starved of oxygen. The Buteyko breathing method restores balance to the respiratory system.

Next, Clark looks at other alternative asthma treatments from acupuncture to yoga, and hints at why your GP may not have heard of the drug-free Buteyko technique.

Finally, he outlines a code of conduct that holistic Buteyko practitioners must abide by; this constitutes useful advice, too, for the client in selecting the right teacher.

A Q&A section, a paper on the theoretical premises of the Buteyko Method and a glossary cap off this very informative book.

## THE INTENTION EXPERIMENT by Lynne McTaggart

Free Press/Simon & Schuster, USA, 2007  
ISBN 0-7432-7695-7 (289pp hc)

Available: <http://www.simonsays.com>

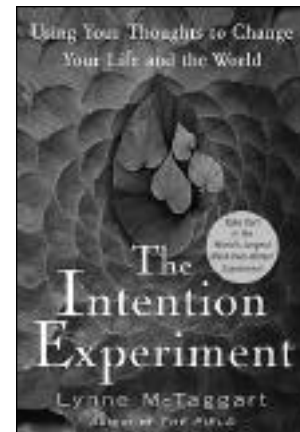
In the follow-up to her book *The Field* (see NEXUS 8/06), London-based health and spirituality author Lynne McTaggart explores what shamans and mystics have known since time immemorial: that thoughts are things with a tangible energy and can exert influence on other things for good or ill, thus affecting physical reality. Furthermore, the power of thought, or intention, can transcend time and space.

Experiments into the so-called "observer" effect in quantum physics were stepped up over 30 years ago to test "directed remote mental influence" and "intentionality", and here McTaggart highlights some landmark scientific research illustrating how intention works, how it can be used in one's life, and the conditions that optimise its effect. Tom Rosenbaum and Sayantani Ghosh's work with "mutable" crystals, Cleve Backster's research on plants and cell cultures reacting to human intent, Elisabeth Targ and Marilyn Schitz's "Love Study" on the effect of "remote staring", Stanley Krippner's research into brain coherence of indigenous and spiritual healers, and Mitch Krucoff and Suzanne Crater's "MANTRA" studies of directed prayer groups are just some of the

frontier science that is changing our understanding of consciousness and reality.

McTaggart introduces her own exciting experiment in which readers can participate after completing her practical program of "intention exercises" designed to aid meditation, visualisation and focus of intent. She's set up a website, <http://www.theintentionexperiment.com>, to allow participants to link up to focus the collective power of positive intention on specific targets, e.g., in remote healing of individuals, clearing pollution or generally helping make the planet a better place with more compassionate people. She has the support of consciousness scientists Brenda Dunne and Robert Jahn of the PEAR lab at Princeton University and Fritz-Albert Popp and colleagues at the International Institute for Biophysics in Germany in designing experimental protocols and analysing the results of each experiment.

It will be interesting to see more proof that the power of our thoughts, intentions, imagery and actions *can* change the world.



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## THE ARK, THE SHROUD, AND MARY by Philip Gardiner

New Page Books, NJ, USA, 2007  
ISBN 1-56414-924-2 (318pp tpb)  
Available: [www.NewPageBooks.com](http://www.NewPageBooks.com);  
<http://www.gardinersworld.com>

Philip Gardiner has spent years studying esoteric art and literature, making contacts with members of secret societies and travelling the world in search of answers to some of the great mysteries of history.

While in Winchester Cathedral, England, looking for images to use in his previous book *Gnosis* (see 13/02), he had an insight about similarities in symbolism in the reliefs on show, perceiving a link between Mary, (the mother of Jesus), the Ark of the Covenant and the Shroud of Turin that some might regard as far-fetched. The story that emerged for him concerns the loss of the Old Covenant and the emergence of the New Covenant or Testimony with the resurrection of Christ from the tomb or Ark.

Gardiner has looked further into the Ark tradition and found evidence of it in Egypt, Mesopotamia and India, where the festival of Jagganath—its centrepiece a large ark-type vehicle—is still celebrated at the Puri shrine in Orissa state. These ancient civilisations also had their goddesses, and Gardiner wondered whether Mary was a Christian version of the Egyptian Isis. But what was her connection with the Ark?

After analysing the myths and etymology associated with the Ark, Gardiner believes it was a "repository" or "vessel" protecting the Divine light of wisdom—and so, too, was Mary who (as the myth goes) gave birth to the Divine child who grew within her. Similarly, the Shroud of Turin could be a repository of the Divine light, released by

Christ while in a state of ecstatic enlightenment as a burst of photonic energy.

The hidden message Gardiner discerns is that God is to be found within each of us: we are the vessels carrying the Divine light. The way to tapping it starts with learning to balance our desires and developing compassion. Gardiner's book informs and inspires.

## CRUSADE AGAINST THE GRAIL

by Otto Rahn

translated by Christopher Jones

Inner Traditions, Rochester, VT, USA,  
2006 (first pub. in German as *Kreuzzug  
gegen den Gral*, Urban Verlag, 1933)  
ISBN 1-59477-135-9 (229pp tpb)

Available: see [www.InnerTraditions.com](http://www.InnerTraditions.com)

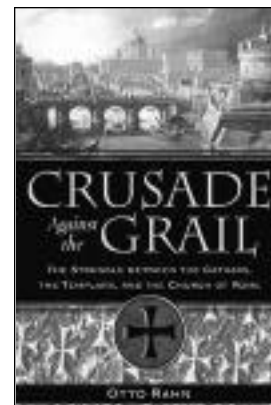
In the process of preparing the first English translation of Otto Rahn's influential 1933 book *Kreuzzug gegen den Gral* ("Crusade against the Grail"), historical scholar Christopher Jones retraced Rahn's footsteps through the caves and castles of the former Cathar territory of southern France.

Based on his reading of Eschenbach's mediaeval chivalric epic *Parzival* as an historical account, Rahn saw the Cathars as the last custodians of the Grail—not the Holy Grail or cup of the blood of Christ, but a "stone from the stars". In his book, Rahn develops the Grail into an icon for the survival of the soul—an emblem for the unseen. The beliefs of the Cathars stemmed from ancient Druidism with a dose of Gnosticism and Manichaeism from the East. Their philosophy was based on the Minne—ideal, sublime love—as the law, and it was practised most diligently by the "Pure Ones", spread by the troubadours and supported by the knights and the people.

Rahn points out that most of the Cathar

writings and, indeed, their culture, were wiped out during the Albigensian Crusade, commencing with the destruction of Béziers in 1209 and continuing till 1229, covering the regions of Languedoc and Provence. Hundreds of thousands of "heretics" to Roman Church doctrines were wiped out by the popes and their minions. However, Rahn managed to piece together a good modicum of their history from extant records and from descendants of survivors. His accounts of the demise of the Cathars are truly shocking, and perhaps Rahn was trying to make sense of his own troubled times in the light of these bloody massacres.

A top German archaeologist and Grail historian, Rahn caught the attention of Heinrich Himmler soon after publication of his book and was induced to assist the Nazis in their explorations into ancient civilisations and treasures. Disillusioned, in 1939 Rahn died in a ritual Cathar style, allegedly committing suicide. His work lives on and contributes a warning about the dangers of extremism that's as true now as in his day.





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## IN SEARCH OF QUETZALCOATL by Pierre Honoré

Adventures Unlimited Press, Kempton, Illinois, USA, 2007 (first published in German as *Ich Fand Den Weissen Gott*, Verlag Heinrich Scheffler, 1961)  
ISBN 1-931882-57-6 (228pp tpb)

Available: [adventuresunlimitedpress.com](http://adventuresunlimitedpress.com)

Many ancient peoples of Central and South America left behind records of a bearded "white god" who brought civilisation to their tribes. He was Quetzalcoatl to the Toltecs and Aztecs, Viracocha to the Inca, and Kukulcan to the Maya.

French researcher Pierre Honoré, whose highly illustrated book on the mysterious heritage of American civilisation was published in 1961, travelled extensively in South and Central America when he was based in Brazil as a government adviser and director of a research institute. In the course of his 15-year investigations of ancient cultural remnants, he observed many parallels with ancient Mediterranean cultures as well as Chinese influences that arrived via the Pacific, causing a cultural explosion in Peru and Bolivia with the Chavin civilisation from around 1000 BC. Later outpourings of Cambodian, Indian and Javanese cultures can be seen in Toltec and Mayan architecture. But it was Mediterranean influences—Minoan and perhaps Phoenician—that were responsible for the bearded white god legends and artefacts, Honoré believed. In a foray up an Amazon tributary, guided by tribal youth with knowledge of the "white god", he rediscovered stones bearing an ancient script of Phoenician source.

Particularly notable was his research into the similarity between Mayan glyphs and the Minoans' original pictorial script, used until

around 1700 BC. Honoré reasoned the script had to have been transferred to the New World by that date; but if it took another 1,500 years for the Mayan civilisation to emerge, then the script had to have been nurtured by an older, as yet unknown, civilisation probably based in the Amazon Valley, where some native peoples of fair skin and hair were still known to live.

While much more has been uncovered since Honoré did his research, his book has laid essential groundwork for getting to the heart of the Mesoamerican mysteries.

## GENESIS OF MAN by June Austin

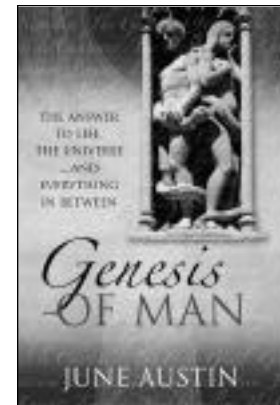
Authors Online for Pigsty Press, UK, 2006  
ISBN 0-7552-0236-8 (261pp tpb)  
Available: <http://www.juneaustin.co.uk>;  
<http://www.authorsonline.co.uk>

In combining her knowledge of pre- and ancient history with mythology and spiritual philosophy, Surrey-based Reiki master and crystal therapist June Austin speculates in *Genesis of Man* on who we are, where we came from and where we're heading.

Austin presents evidence for an alternative celestial heritage where the first humans were seeded by extraterrestrial "gods" who returned from time to time to instruct the fledgling *Homo sapiens*. Information about the solar system, for instance—as can be seen in ancient clay seals—was passed on by the Nephilim, part angelic souls from another world, Nibiru, to the ancient Sumerians of Mesopotamia. These were a people whose civilisation *seemed* to "spring from nowhere", as did that of the Egyptians, the Maya and perhaps even the Atlanteans. However, some of what Austin suggests about civilisations of prehistory and other

matters is sourced from the realm of channelling, which can't be considered reliable.

Nor can more recent records in the Gospels be considered "Gospel truth", and Austin admits this, relating examples of inconsistencies between these four books, yet she devotes many pages to alternative takes on what are undoubtedly forged holy books but coded with esoteric messages. Influenced by the famous "Course in Miracles", Austin makes the case for our being souls interconnected with the Divine source, our role in this world being to learn to balance the light and the dark within ourselves. The more aware we are of our Divine heritage, the more connected we are with humanity as a whole and the more able we are to exercise forgiveness and compassion to our fellow man. The way home comes by getting in touch with the silence within, not by blind faith in a priesthood or religious buildings and ceremonies. (I'd have liked to see a closing chapter that draws all these threads together, but maybe that's in the second edition that's being printed as we go to press.)



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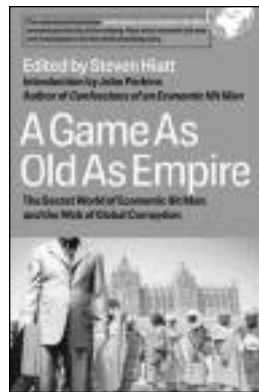
## **A GAME AS OLD AS EMPIRE: The Secret World of Economic Hit Men and the Web of Global Corruption**

edited by Steven Hiatt  
Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, USA, 2007

ISBN 1-57675-395-6 (310pp hc)  
Available: <http://www.bkconnection.com>

When former "economic hit man" ("EHM") John Perkins came clean in 2004 about his past as an agent for the "corporatocracy", bringing developing nations to their knees, he was somewhat stunned by corporate media's lack of interest in his book, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*. This only proved his point about corporate interests protecting their own. Pressed to prove that this secret global empire actually existed, Perkins and his publisher set about commissioning this compilation, appointing editor and activist Steven Hiatt to the task.

The result, *A Game As Old As Empire*, is a collection of essays by former EHMs, jour-



nalists and activists who are just as keen to expose the fact that corporations, governments, financial institutions and international agencies enrich their coffers under the guise of "foreign aid" and "international development". Perkins leads with new revelations about the dark side of globalisation, and Hiatt is next with his views on the Global Empire's web of control, where the Global South subsidises the wealthy North.

A dozen others speak out: former banker Sam Gwynne on setting the debt trap; ex-offshore banker John Christensen on laundering dirty money flows; Lucy Komisar on the BCCI's double game; Kathleen Kern on the human cost of cheap cellphones (coltan vs the Congolese); Andrew Rowell and James Marriott on mercenaries protecting corporate interests on the African front lines; and Gregg Muttitt on EHMs' hijacking of Iraq's oil reserves. But there's more...

Former World Bank staffer Steve Berkman explains how the debt-based development strategy diverts money into the hands of the corrupt elite; Ellen Augustine reveals how

the World Bank financed martial law under Marcos; Bruce Rich uncovers the secretive world of export credit agencies (ECAs) and the social, economic and environmental damage they wreak around the world; and James S. Henry unveils the mirage of debt relief, where poor countries are forced to close hospitals and schools, and he suggests steps for an effective debt relief campaign.

Antonia Juhasz (*The Bush Agenda*) has the final say with her piece on the global web of resistance that in recent years has been making a dent against exploitation and introducing strategies that promote social justice and empowerment. This is a call to action!

## **THE CHILLING STARS: A New Theory of Climate Change**

by Henrik Svensmark & Nigel Calder

Icon Books, UK, Canada, 2007;

Totem Books, USA, 2007

ISBN 1-84046-815-7 (246pp tpb)

Available: <http://www.iconbooks.co.uk>

Just when you thought the carbon dioxide theory of global warming was gaining the upper hand, along comes a theory that puts the Sun back into the equation and introduces cosmic rays and clouds. *The Chilling Stars* is a collaboration between Henrik Svensmark, of the Danish National Space Centre, and Nigel Calder, science writer and editor of *New Scientist* in the 1960s.

Ten years of research by Svensmark shows that cosmic rays, sourced from exploding stars, play a part in making clouds here on Earth, but that, in the last 100 years, increasing levels of solar activity have deflected more and more of these rays, resulting in fewer clouds and a warmer planet. Studies of Greenland and Antarctic ice cores as well as seabed cores show that our climate is cyclical and goes through warming and cooling phases; indeed, it can even go through warming during times of glaciation.

Only last year, Svensmark was able to demonstrate in the lab that cosmic rays, of the highly energetic muon variety, have enough velocity to approach sea level and, because they are charged, liberate electrons and act as building blocks of condensation nuclei on which water droplets form to produce clouds in the lower atmosphere. When the Sun is in a less active phase, more of these muons can penetrate our atmosphere and form more clouds, radiating more heat into space. As well, cosmic ray bombardments differ in magnitude depending on the location of the solar system in its path through the Milky Way; when we cross the galactic mid-plane, cosmic rays are stronger and the Earth goes through a cooling cycle.

Before you make up your mind about the causes of climate change, you're advised to read this controversial, compelling book.



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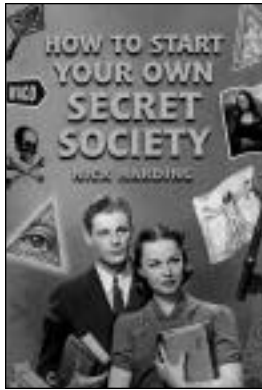
## HOW TO START YOUR OWN SECRET SOCIETY

by Nick Harding

Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, UK, 2006  
ISBN 1-904048-84-6 (350pp pb)  
Available: <http://www.noexit.co.uk>;  
[www.turnaround-uk.com](http://www.turnaround-uk.com)

His tongue often firmly in cheek, Nick Harding carries off this guide to starting your own secret society with aplomb while being quite serious about the subject. With this book, I'm reminded of the Monty Python sketch where the John Cleese character lashes out at the Freemason architects who wouldn't let him join their fraternity. Here are tips for come-uppance against the nefarious powers that be, whether they be at local, national or global level, and many opportunities for creative participation.

As you'll see in these pages, many revolutionary movements got their impetus at the local pub or coffee house. Some were more successful than others, and Harding gives



pointers on how to maintain secrecy, create special communication codes including passwords and handshakes, and deal with the inevitable political intrigue that results from, well, having a secret society. Some societies of the past were actually satires on the really secret societies of their times, which is heartening in that this confirms humour's long history as an antidote to oppression. So, with this considered advice, you're encouraged to let rip with your wishes for local dominion or global domination.

Harding acknowledges input from Masonic brothers who have enlightened him as to the workings of their secretive ceremonies. These notes proffer essential background information if you want to create your own inner sanctum and confound your potential detractors. There are tips on what to look for in conspiracy theorists to head them off at the pass, and notes on requirements as a member of such high-profile groups as the Knights Templar, Illuminati, Opus Dei and the Freemasons. An amusing diversion with snippets of truth.

## GHOST PLANE: The Untold Story of the CIA's Torture Programme

by Stephen Grey

Scribe Publications, Melbourne, Australia, 2007 (first published by C. Hurst & Co., UK, 2006)

ISBN 1-921215-35-6 (339pp tpb)

Available: see [scribepublications.com.au](http://scribepublications.com.au);  
<http://www.hurstpub.co.uk>

The expression "extraordinary rendition" describes the capture of suspected terrorists and transfer by CIA-hired private jets to foreign prisons and secret detention facilities for interrogation and torture. Journalist Stephen Grey headed the UK *Sunday Times Insight* investigation team when, in the USA soon after 9/11, he first heard of these transfers and then set about obtaining the logs of these new-style "Air America" CIA flights.

Grey went public in May 2004 in an article for the *New Statesman*, and in time has collected about 12,000 records for over 20 planes that transported prisoners to a range of countries cooperating with the US Bush administration in its "war on terror", including Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Morocco and Thailand, most of which had no problems with their military secret police torturing detainees held without charge. Yet even in December 2005, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice claimed the US would never transport prisoners to places where they'd be tortured, and British PM Tony Blair denied there was evidence of any illegal conduct.

In *Ghost Plane*, Grey spills the beans on the CIA's extraordinary rendition program as well as the Pentagon's role in mass renditions via US military transport planes. Indeed, there's nothing new about these renditions: the US has been carrying them out for decades but stepped up activities in response to 9/11. Grey has been able to pin down 89 renditions since then (listed in the appendix), but he suspects that several thousand individuals have been imprisoned. In fact, the Guantánamo Bay renditions are just the tip of the iceberg, he maintains.

While the majority of prisoners are still unaccounted for, some have been released on no charges and their desperate stories are recounted here, along with testimony on and off the record from CIA pilots, operations officers and chiefs as well as White House officials who knew that torture was inevitable in these foreign prisons.

Grey recounts in the third part of his book the international public backlash against these renditions and the involvement of so-called democratic governments in facilitating them. All the while, the Bush administration wants to continue these covert extra-legal practices. This is a chilling exposé that, it's hoped, will help turn the tables.

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## DVDs/CDs

Compiled by Duncan Roads

**THUNDERBOLTS – The Tutorial: Pt 1**  
Produced by David Talbott, Ben Ged Low  
© 2007 Silver Wolf Productions Inc. and Kronia Group  
Available: <http://www.thunderbolts.info>;  
<http://www.kronia.com/>

Current popular scientific theories can neither predict nor explain the recent discoveries and phenomena we are now observing in space.

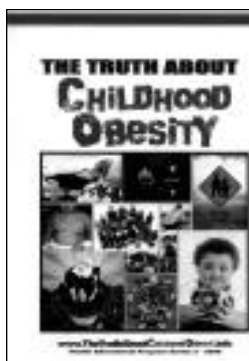
David Talbott and Wallace Thornhill are two among many proposing a new theory which can predict and explain these phenomena. The Electric Model challenges our fundamental assumptions about the workings of the universe and explains why the Sun is *not* a nuclear furnace, why comets are *not* dirty snowballs and why there is *no* such thing as dark matter.

This DVD, with its breathtaking graphics and imagery, clearly shows both sides of the debate in easy-to-understand language.

It is interesting to note that some of the ancient rock art found in Australia shows exactly the same electric discharge patterns as found in plasma experiments in the lab.

The Electric Model is surely our next step in understanding how the cosmos works.

Warning! This DVD contains stunning colour images of galaxy spirals, clusters and nebula forms. Electrifying!



## THE TRUTH ABOUT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Produced by Health Educational Program,  
<http://www.thetruthabouthypertension.info>  
Available: Eleotin 4 Diabetes, PO Box 12,  
Hornsby NSW 2077, Australia, tel+61 (0)2  
9476 0936, <http://www.eastwoodcos.com>

According to the US Centers for Disease Control, nine million American children are substantially overweight. Based on current trends, this number is estimated to increase by 20% in the next five years.

Though many factors contribute to cause obesity, the largest single cause is poor

information. Many parents and adults, in addition to children themselves, fail to see the consequences of what would seem like a collection of harmless habits. With the knowledge of causation—ranging from imbalanced diet to lack of exercise—parents, guardians and children can be better equipped to combat obesity.

Dr Youngsoo Kim and Christina Sestan discuss the various contributing factors and also show steps you can take to prevent or reverse obesity.

## A SPACE STORY: An Antidote to Narrow Mindedness

© 2006-07 by Mayan Animations  
Website: [www.mayananimations.com](http://www.mayananimations.com)

This thought-provoking DVD includes audio interviews with some of today's foremost scientists and researchers exploring UFO-related issues and zero-point energy.

Basically what you have here are some very good audio interview clips running in the background, accompanied by some very spacey, but unrelated, graphics. By "spacey", I mean imagery of UFOs, alien landscapes, spacescapes, etc.

Nick Pope (former UK Ministry of Defence officer on the UFO desk) is quite candid regarding his views and involvement at the MoD. There are lots of interesting tidbits, including his observations about the number of abductees who have the rhesus negative blood type.

Engineer John Hutchison is also interviewed and, as usual, he has some amazing things to say about gravity and antigravity. (I'm still waiting for a good DVD just on him—hint, hint!)

Nuclear physicist Stanton Friedman has always got some real pearls, and he drops most of them during his interview segments.

Alex Agnew, of whom I was shamefully unfamiliar beforehand, comes up with some fascinating quantum physics information.

Having unrelated, "relaxing" imagery running across the screen, while you listen to physics raves, really does help you reach a rational understanding of these subjects.





# REVIEWS

## MUSIC

Reviewed by Richard Giles

### GYPSY GROOVE

by various artists

Putumayo, USA, 2007 (43mins)

Distributors: **Aust**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **UK**—Putumayo Music, tel 07759 600495; **USA**—www.putumayo.com

Gypsies, or Roma as they prefer to be called, have an extensive, amazing history. They migrated from the Indus Valley over 1,000 years ago, first to the Middle East and Eastern Europe and then on to the rest of the world. As master musicians/entertainers, they cross into many genres—flamenco, Jewish klezmer and even classical music. *Gypsy Groove* features Balkan beats, gypsy jams and other gems from leaders of this rich music scene. A fast, fantastic collection that gets you on your feet.

### LION OF AFRICA

by Manu Dibango

Global Mix, UK, 2007 (CD & DVD, 84mins each)

Distributors: **Australia**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **UK**—Global Mix, tel +44 (0)118 9406812, <http://www.esip.co.uk>

The growth of world music in the last 30 years owes so much to Manu Dibango. His mixture of Cameroonian dancehall style with American soul-jazz woke up the world in the 1970s with his huge hit "Soul Makossa". Manu is a singer, a composer and an arranger, with multi-instrumental talents ranging over alto and tenor sax, marimbas and piano. This UK concert, recorded in October 2004 for his 71st birthday, also features Baaba Maal (vocals), Coco Mbassi (vocals) and Courtney Pine (sax)—all giants of world music. You're treated to a sublime version of "Summertime", a cool rendition of the signature "Soul Makossa" and many more jazz, swing and African-influenced standards. A classic CD, and you can take in the concert on DVD as well. Heaven!

### THE SHAPE OF LIGHT

by Jeff Ball

Red Feather Music, 2007 (60mins)

Distributor: **USA**—Four Winds Trading Company, tel 800 456 5444 (toll free), [www.fourwinds-trading.com/store](http://www.fourwinds-trading.com/store); <http://www.jeffball.net>

Jeff Ball's new album *The Shape of Light* uplifts with rhythm that is loose and yet sweet. Jeff, on Native American flute, is supported by an ensemble of talented musicians: Peter Phippen on bansuri (bamboo flute), Ron Kravitz on the hang and the shruti box; Ron Warren on piano; Dawn

Avery on cello; Arvel Bird on violin; John Natale on acoustic guitar; and Trevor Ball on rainstick. Flute devotees as well as ambient music lovers will treasure this CD.

### VIEUX FARKA TOURE

by Vieux Farka Touré

World Village, Europe, 2006 (50mins)

Distributors: **Aust**—Select Audio, tel (07) 3849 6020; **Germany**—Harmonia Mundi, tel +49 (0)711 2567671; **USA**—World Village, tel (818) 333 1500, website <http://www.worldvillagemusic.com>

Vieux Farka Touré's debut album represents an historic passing of the torch from father Ali Farka Touré to son (NEXUS 12/06, 13/04). Vieux is a highly talented guitarist, singer, songwriter and percussionist in his own right. His songs are global-minded music for the new millennium, where ancient African meets reggae and rock. His late father joins him on two tracks, and Toumani Diabaté plays kora on another two. A fabulous first album, mixing modern with Malian traditions.

### RAHWANA'S CRY

by SambaSunda

Network Medien, 2005 (59mins)

Distributors: **Aust**—Select Audio, tel (07) 3849 6020; **Germany**—Network Medien, fax +49 (0)69 499 0097, website <http://www.networkmedien.de>

In modern Indonesia, a fresh generation of musicians is redefining an ancient musical heritage. SambaSunda, a 17-member group, brings together an array of Sundanese and other ethnic instruments to create a new-style gamelan orchestra. Classic sounds of the traditional instruments evoke the past and also reflect the bustling, urban, youthful energy of today. SambaSunda's members, while respecting their roots, have found a way to layer old into new. They resist electronica, mixing instruments and blending old dance styles into new forms. An energetic album from a new Indonesia.

